

DIVIDED TOGETHER

Written by

EWAN MACBETH

Based on, Real Fictions

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - DAY.

Stainless-steel VECTOR LIGHT RAYS fixed onto a wall, a political logo / symbol that forms a half sun. Abstract shadows of passing figures are reflected on the surface of this structure.

THE LEADER, 45, handsome and oozing privilege, steps into frame, stares into the camera and starts to speak. The generic logo perfectly sits behind his head, like a religious icon.

THE LEADER

Hello, and welcome friends. A new dawn, is it not?  
I trust you all have been  
Anticipating this new moment in time.  
A new moment, and with it, as we all know, a new future. The New Future.

Open hand gestures are used to convey his optimistic message.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

First, I must thank you for believing in me and entrusting my party with the privilege of leading you forward.  
Now, we must step up and unite, put our differences aside, and construct the reality we all deserve. Together we have the power to collectively confront our shared challenges. We must never go back to those bad days, those divided days we all wish to forget.

CAMERA: SLOW TRACK OUT.

It is revealed that this is taking place on a flat screen wall mounted TELEVISION, creating a frame within a frame.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

This New future will ensure that the creative energy of our best and brightest is unlocked to its fullest potential.

(MORE)

## THE LEADER (CONT'D)

We intend to continue maintaining stability between nations and mutual co-operation between fellow peaceful cultures.

Ultimately, we will value the sovereignty of the individual, whilst instilling in that individual a respect for the rules that are the foundations of our unique society.

CAMERA continues to track out, Slowly revealing the backs of two men, and two women all facing in its direction and watching it. The chairs are placed symmetrically, creating a theatrical blocking.

On the TV the Leader, With one hand he makes a finger and the other hand he cusps it. This is his signature hand gesture.

## THE LEADER (CONT'D)

Today, the Kaleidoscope has been shaken. The pieces are now in flux. When they settle we will have a new world, built around us.

The Advisor holds up a REMOTE CONTROL and points it at the Television, as he pauses the broadcast, we change to the televisions perspective.

We can now clearly see the characters who stare into THE CAMERA. The Wife, 45, stylish and beautiful, sit's crossed legged holding The Leader's hand, who is grimacing at himself in the broadcast. The Deputy, 70, slick yet weathered, holds the remote, whilst The Script Writer, 35, pretty and quaint, holds a clip board. They are all immaculately dressed in a well-lit contemporary office space, with unique lighting and carpet design. Behind them the window is structured into three triangular panels, behind which we can see the real sun. It's unclear whether it is rising or setting.

## THE DEPUTY

"The Kaleidoscope has been shaken"?  
I don't remember this absurd line being in our agreed upon script.

## THE SCRIPT WRITER

I added it last night. We both felt the speech required an optimistic, yet ambiguous ending proclamation.

## THE WIFE

Personally, I think it's a fantastic ending line. It conveys our sense of ambition. It's important that we dream big!

## THE DEPUTY

I suggest that we try sticking to the agreed upon script... It's important that we maintain a consistent narrative of address.

The Leader stands up and walks around past The Wife over to the windows. The others' heads follow as he does this. THE CAMERA pushes forward between the chairs stopping until it has formed a new frame. The Leader stands with his hand on the window, looking out at the sky.

## THE SCRIPT WRITER

Well... What do you think?

## THE LEADER

Today: A New Dawn.  
Tomorrow?

View from above. The room is shaped the exact same size as the aspect ratio of the film. The carpet is a map of an ambiguous territory. From above we can see The Wife, The Deputy and The Script Writer all turned in The Leaders direction. The Leader stares out of the window / the frame of the film. He appears trapped.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES: DIVIDED TOGETHER

FADE IN:

INT. HALL - DAY

An expansive hall, with vast ceilings. Here 100 Members of The Party, some activists, some politicians and some children are staring into THE CAMERA and celebrating. Some are wearing T-shirts saying "A NEW FUTURE", others with The Party's logo, some wear suits or dresses with badges. At the front The Boy, 10, wears a 2 dimensional Mask of The Leader's face. They start clapping cheering and stamping their feet. Confetti releases.

HOLD.

The Leader and The Wife stand opposite, smiling, having just walked through the doors. The Leader gestures with his hands to quieten down the group.

Cameras flash.

THE LEADER  
We did it! This is the first day of  
my, our, new future!  
(Hands in the air)

The Party Members cheer / clap / stamp again, then stop.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
I was elected on a campaign promise  
to continue building on the  
political legacy of my father and  
this party that he founded. Well,  
When I make a promise... I KEEP IT!

More shouting and wooing.

And, your hard work getting us here  
hasn't gone unappreciated. I'm not  
going to leave till I've personally  
met and thanked every single one of  
you... Because you are the  
foundations, which keep this party  
above ground.

More woo's from the crowd as The Wife and The Leader embrace.

Cameras continue to Flash.

CUT TO:

LATER

The hall is large, well lit and filled with people.

There is a corner wall mounted flat screen television,  
switched on and displaying static.

There are balloons that have floated to the ceiling and  
confetti on the floor. In the middle of the space, is a Neon  
Sign of The Party's sunburst Logo.

The atmosphere is like an office Christmas party, a forced  
celebration.

Moving through the room we intersect peoples conversations  
and explore the space.

So many people are speaking that the dialogue is mostly

inaudible.

The Leader is drinking champagne and regaling a story in a group of intently listening people.

The Wife comes over and taps him.

THE WIFE

Sorry to interrupt. Can I have a word in private?

THE LEADER

Of course. Sorry everyone, I have some business I must attend to.

INT. PORTRAIT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A large ornate room adorned with framed portraits of past leaders, all white and all male. Some photographs, some paintings. A chandelier hangs in the middle of the high ceiling. The Leader and The Wife are having a personal moment together. The Wife wipes dandruff from his shoulders as she gazes lovingly into his eyes.

THE LEADER

What's up with you?

THE WIFE

I just wanted to steal a kiss with the man of the moment.

As she strokes his hair, they awkwardly kiss, with tongues.

THE WIFE (CONT'D)

Are you Ready to lead our country?

THE LEADER

Darling, I was born ready.

THE WIFE

Speaking of born: have you spoken to our son since the election?

THE LEADER

No, not yet.

THE WIFE

Shall we go up to your office and do it now? I think he'd like to speak with us.

THE LEADER

After I've done some photo's with everyone... I need to savour this moment.

He lovingly stokes her hair.

THE WIFE

What about my photo opp?

THE LEADER

Let's take a spontaneous selfie then?

THE WIFE

Sure thing!

The Leader takes his phone out of his pocket. He opens it phone, goes to the camera section and then holds the device in front of their faces. They produce choreographed smiles as he makes the picture. They both look at it together.

THE LEADER

I'll upload it now....

The Leader then proceeds to upload the image to social media.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

That is destined for loads of likes.

CUT TO:

INT. ADJACENT ROOM - LATER

A Blank white wall, almost like a photo studio.

The Leader walks into the frame.

He stands, stares and holds a pose.

Cameras flash.

Following this, various members of the The Party take turns being photographed with The Leader.

Cameras continue to flash and click from different angles.

The atmosphere is both awkward and absurd.

Magazines with The Leader on the cover are held up.

The Girl, 8, star struck, wearing a baggy slogan T-shirt walks into the shot. She looks up at The Leader:

THE GIRL  
I can't believe I'm seeing you in  
real life.

THE LEADER  
Me neither!  
(Distant, looking away)

THE GIRL  
If I wasn't too young to vote, I  
would have voted for you.

THE LEADER  
You're too kind. I ought to change  
the voting age so you can have your  
say.  
(Warmly)

The Boy, 12, wearing a mask of The Leaders face, comes for a photograph. The Leader poses to shake his hand. Cameras continue to flash.

THE BOY  
Can I just say that.. It's a real  
privilege to wear the party  
colours.

THE LEADER  
Yes, isn't it.

The Leader moves The Boy in front of him and leans down so his face is next to the mask of himself.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LEADER'S OFFICE.

The Leaders office is a large space separated into two main areas with windows around one side of the space. There is a sofa area with a coffee table in the shape of a face, that cries glass tears, surrounded by plants. The other area is where business is done, a reflective desk with three chairs. On the desk is a tablet set up to look like a photo frame. The Leader and The wife come in, each with a glass of champagne, both slightly tipsy.



THE WIFE

He should call any minute.... Just remember to actually engage with him this time, he's having a really tough time at school.

THE LEADER

Who doesn't though?

THE WIFE

The other boys don't half give him grief.

TABLET STARTS RINGING. Message pops up, ACCEPT CALL? The Wife eagerly touches the screen and they are now in a video call with The Son, 10, meekly dressed in a school uniform. The curtains behind him form a kind of backdrop.

THE LEADER

Hey there! I've been eager to talk to you.

THE SON

Hi, Mum and Dad.

The Son is very distant throughout the conversation.

THE WIFE

Yes, it's so good to see you darling! How are you?

THE SON

I'm okay.  
(distant)

THE WIFE

How are your studies going?

THE LEADER

Did you see daddy on TV?

THE SON

My studies are going well. We're learning about evolution in biology class at the moment. Yes, I watched you both.

THE WIFE

Oh, wonderful! And what have you learned?

THE SON

That humans are all products of a thing called natural selection.

(MORE)

THE SON (CONT'D)

And that before we believed this...  
people thought that a god made us.

THE LEADER

That's right son, actually some  
people still believe in religion.

THE WIFE

It is silly isn't it, believing in  
something without proof it's real?

THE SON

Yes Mummy.

THE DAD

So, what's all this about boys  
giving you a hard time? Your  
mother's been telling me all about  
it.

THE SON

It's just some of the older boys  
that are in the rival house. They  
say you stole the election.

THE WIFE

That's nonsense. Your father comes  
from an eminent line of-

THE LEADER

Those boys are just bias because  
their parents voted for the  
opposition! Clearly they are  
incapable of thinking for  
themselves! Don't worry, I'll talk  
to the headmaster, see if he can  
install some disciple. Just don't  
slack off with your studies.

(Firm)

THE WIFE

Your family is always here for you  
whenever you need to talk to us.  
You can't let bullying get you  
down! We love you so much, and  
we're so proud of you.

THE LEADER

Just remember son that life there  
is a matter of give and take. Boys  
sometimes gave me a hard time when  
I studied there... but don't worry,  
it doesn't stay with you.

THE WIFE  
Are you proud of Daddy?

THE SON  
Yes, very much so.

THE LEADER  
Thank you, I knew you believed in  
me, I love you Son.

THE SON  
I've got to go now. Love you both  
too. Bye.

THE LEADER  
Talk soon, Bye!  
(Waving)

THE WIFE  
Goodbye Darling!  
(Blowing kisses.)

The call ends. The images disappears from the tablet. The  
Leader breathes a subtle sigh of relief.

THE LEADER  
I can't believe those kids say I  
stole the election. That's not fair  
at all!  
(Indignant)

THE WIFE  
There's always going to be  
accusations from nonbelievers. It  
comes with the territory we've  
chosen.

Beat.

What about the boys bullying our  
son?

THE LEADER  
He's a really tough kid. There's  
nothing that will happen to him  
there that didn't happen to me.

Beat.

At least he will build a thick skin  
to criticism.

THE WIFE  
I'll talk to the headmaster about  
it as soon as. I won't have a  
victim for a son.

The Leader stands up, walks around the desk.

THE LEADER  
You won't. Anyway, I've got to go.

THE WIFE  
Are you going off to meet who I  
think you are?

The Leader checks the time on his inherited watch.

THE LEADER  
Yes.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTARAUNT FOYER - NIGHT

The foyer is ornate, with large mirrors adorning the walls.  
THE MAÎTRE D, 35, dressed immaculately with perfect posture,  
stands alone with his hands behind his back, as if he's being  
watched. The Leader arrives, walking down the staircase.

THE MAÎTRE D  
Hello sir, so kind of you to pay us  
a visit.

THE LEADER  
Hello. Well I live upstairs, so  
it's no bother.

THE MAÎTRE D  
Congratulations on your win by the  
way. I voted for you!

THE LEADER  
Oh, you did? Thank you.

The leader shakes his hand, with two hands, for slightly too  
long.

THE MAÎTRE D  
So, Shall I take you to your usual  
spot?

THE LEADER  
Yes.

The Maître D leads The Leader through The expansive  
contemporary restaraunt.

They move through the main area which is open plan, mostly deserted apart from a few scattered people dining together at different tables.

Some guests notice him, and try to subtly point him out to who they are with.

The Leader notices this.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He gets taken to a special, secluded and intimate dining room. The room itself evokes a terrarium, with a carpet that looks like a mixture between fake grass and moss. The walls are all covered in ivy. In the middle is a table that jars with this, illuminated from within, like a light box. The Leader sits on one of the chairs that are around it.

THE MAÎTRE D  
A drink while you wait?

THE LEADER  
No, I'm just fine, thank you.

As The Leader waits for the person he's meeting, he takes out his phone and starts flicking through photographs. We see the selfie taken earlier and some pictures of his son. He stares looking at a particular picture of his son. Then he moves on to a news article about himself.

After a few minutes in walks The Mogul, 75, vacant stare, with dyed brown hair with creeping grey roots. He wears his suit, unbuttoned, slightly exposing his chest. He starts to clap, very slowly, in a patronising way.

THE MOGUL  
Congratulations dear boy! The enemy  
lies vanquished, and you stand  
triumphant.

The Leader stands up. They shake hands.

THE LEADER  
Hi, You are... late.  
(cold)

THE MOGUL  
There's no need to look like you've  
inherited a haunted house.  
(Patronising)

They both sit down.

THE MOGUL (CONT'D)  
Anyway, How the devil are you?

THE LEADER  
Good. Yourself?

THE MOGUL  
I'm fighting sleep, to be honest. I was up all night watching the victory.

THE LEADER  
Yeah, I haven't slept well either.

Beat.

Anyway, I just wanted to thank you for the support your newspapers and channels gave me throughout the campaign. I, we, are so grateful.

THE MOGUL  
Well, I gave you my word... I always keep it.

THE LEADER  
And I intend to keep my side of the bargain.

THE MOGUL  
Naturally.

The Waiter, 25, of an anxious disposition comes in.

THE WAITER  
Can I get you gentlemen a drink?

THE MOGUL  
Triple Whiskey. Ice.

THE WAITER  
Unfortunately due to licensing laws I can only give you a double.

THE MOGUL  
Okay, get me 1 double and 1 single. Then just before you bring it over, pour one in to the other glass. Got it?

THE WAITER  
Yes, sir.

THE MOGUL  
How clever of you!

THE LEADER  
I'll have the same.

THE WAITER  
Right away, Sir.

The waiter scuttles off and out of the room.

THE LEADER  
That's a law I'll have to change!  
(Laughing)

THE MOGUL  
Make sure that fool get's the memo!  
(Laughing)  
So how's your gorgeous wife?

THE LEADER  
She's great, overjoyed I won  
naturally. How's yours?

THE MOGUL  
The cunt is divorcing me! She's  
trying to clean me totally out.  
She'd take every asset I have, if  
she could.

THE LEADER  
Oh... I'm sorry to hear that.

THE MOGUL  
Don't be.... This is my fourth  
divorce. At this point it's  
basically my main hobby!  
(laughing)

THE LEADER  
Expensive hobby!

THE MOGUL  
I can afford it.

THE LEADER  
Did you see the opposition leader's  
face on election night?

THE MOGUL  
He looked a shadow of his former  
self.

THE LEADER  
Poor fucker. Always was a walking shadow.

The drinks arrive. They both ungratefully take the glasses.

THE MOGUL  
I didn't think you would wipe him out so easily.

THE LEADER  
Well, you totally assassinated his character. That helped.

THE MOGUL  
Serves the bastard right.  
Beat.  
He had the audacity to talk about press regulation!

THE LEADER  
Well you can rest assured, that there will be no more threats to meddle with your affairs.

They both drink the whiskey, really considering it's taste.

THE MOGUL  
You do now need to consider tactics. It's one thing running for election, you can ride on a wave of hope.... Maintaining support, staying in office... That requires a subtle level of fear.

THE LEADER  
Well, I've got a wonderful director of communications, she's holding the whole show together just fine.

THE MOGUL  
To be honest, I'm not so sure she's up to the job.

THE LEADER  
What makes you say that? What's wrong with her?

THE MOGUL  
Nothing wrong with her, but not much right either. I just find her difficult to communicate with, she doesn't...

(MORE)



THE MOGUL (CONT'D)

Seem to speak my language. I know a better chap. It'll be easier to maintain cohesion between our teams if you use one of my boys.

THE LEADER

Who'd you have in mind?

THE MOGUL

I was thinking that, seeing as you are old friends, you could use my public relations man.

THE LEADER

No, no way!

THE MOGUL

I thought you two were school friends?

THE LEADER

No... We weren't in any way friends at school. He was a couple years above me, so we never could speak. We did however, become good friends at University, as we were in the same social club. But through time we've outgrown each other, lost contact... Besides I would never want to work with him.

THE MOGUL

Why the devil don't you want him?

THE LEADER

He's a very... particular man. Besides, I already have a wonderful director of communications. I just won an election using her, after all.

THE MOGUL

But this man is also a journalist himself. He actually understand how the game is played. She's just-

THE LEADER

Listen: I'm trying to avoid having a party that is totally male, pale and stale.

THE MOGUL

How very... woke of you.

THE LEADER

Oh, I am woke. I'm the king of  
woke.

THE MOGUL

Well, you are awake. I'll give you  
that.

The mogul sniggers as they both pause to drink.

THE MOGUL (CONT'D)

But... He can be both your speech  
writer and chief strategist. It's  
rare to find a man who can actually  
multi task!

THE LEADER

Listen, he's just an extremely  
dominant character. Also, my wife  
doesn't like him... They had a big  
falling out at university.

THE MOGUL

What about?

THE LEADER

I can't remember, some drunken  
student union fight, probably. This  
was 20 years ago... the details  
remain elusive in my memory.

THE MOGUL

He understands public relations  
better than anyone I know, bar me.  
He's a damn good journalist too, he  
understands the power of a well  
told story... He knows how to spin  
the yarn! He's driven: that's the  
kind of man you need.

THE LEADER

Listen, I said no! I know exactly  
what I need.

(Pointing)

THE MOGUL

What?

THE LEADER

Another bloody drink!

The leader, shakes his glass, the ice cubes clink together,  
he looks around for the waiter.

The Waiter appears and takes their glasses. We now follow him, out of the room, through the restaraunt and to the bar.

He makes two triple whiskeys.

As he does this the Clock in the background speeds forward in time two hours.

As we move back into the room we see The Leader and The Mogul from behind.

Clearly a huge amount of time has passed for them, but not The Waiter.

They exist in different time zones.

The leader, is now slightly slouched, glassy-eyed, clearly drunk. The mogul, also drunk and haggard, looks like he's aged a decade.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

And that was it! I was initiated  
into the club.

(Slurring)

THE MOGUL

That's disgraceful behaviour!  
(Cackling with laughter)

Beat.

Ahhh, here's our nightcap!

They both turn to take the drinks from the waiter.

THE LEADER

I was only supposed to meet you for  
a couple drinks... Time flies when  
your having fun, I suppose.

They both down their two drinks.

THE MOGUL

Yes... and On that note, I must go.  
It's well and truly past my  
bedtime!

The mogul stands up, with considerable struggle. The Leader jumps up with a sudden burst of energy at this.

THE MOGUL (CONT'D)

Consider my offer... He'd make a  
perfect advisor.

THE LEADER  
Don't tell me what to do.  
(Slurring, Pointing)

The Mogul ruffles his hair, like a pet dog.

THE MOGUL  
They'll be erecting statues in your  
honour in no time.

The Mogul gently slaps his face.

THE MOGUL (CONT'D)  
No time.

CUT TO:

INT. THE RESTAURANT BATHROOM.

The toilet's in the bathroom are like individual eggs.

The Leader runs into one of these cubicles, shuts the door and starts to vomit.

We hear a flush and from another cubicle The Customer, 45, comes out and goes over to wash his hands.

As he finishes The Leader comes out, clearly drained, and wipes his mouth with his hand.

THE CUSTOMER  
Oh, wow! I can't... believe it's  
you. I voted for you!

The Customer reaches out and shakes his slightly sick covered hand.

THE LEADER  
Yeah, well, I voted for me too.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LEADER'S BEDROOM. - NIGHT

The leader stumbles into his bedroom where The Wife lies deep asleep in their bed.

He takes his jacket and tie off and throws them on the ground.

He watches her for a moment.

He kicks off his shoes and walks slowly over to his bed.

He lies down on it.

He strokes her hair.

His eyes flicker as he falls asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAWN

DREAM SEQUENCE

The Leader is barefoot, yet dressed in a suit.

For the first time he is in colour, and outside.

He walks towards a distant town square.

This square is isolated in it's environment.

There are no buildings around it.

The light is cold and the air misty.

It is snowing.

In the distance are some tarpaulin covered structures.

As he walks towards these structures, it becomes clear they are covered statues.

They look like statues waiting to be unveiled.

Equally they could be structures that have been covered up.

In a sequence shot The Leader walks around these structures inspecting them.

He reaches out to touch one.

It collapses into the ground, as if nothing was under it.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LEADERS BEDROOM - MORNING

The Leader wakes up, hungover and for a moment forgetting where he is.

The Wife is watching a news broadcast.

THE NEWS BROADCASTER

And with such a prominent legacy to live up to: he clearly has his work cut out.

So, just what are the problems our new leader must now confront?

Firstly: a complex conflict started by his predecessor, we seem stuck in an endless war which appears to have no end in sight.

On the broadcast is footage of soldiers, with rifles, wearing digital camouflage and raiding houses.

The Leader reaches over, takes the remote and turns off the channel.

THE LEADER

I'm too fucking hungover for this.

THE WIFE

Oh, a heavy a night?

The Leader groans in response.

He then turns over on his side and deeply sighs and starts to go back to sleep.

CUT TO:

THE LEADERS OFFICE.

The Leader is sitting on his sofa, nursing a terrible hangover with a grimace. He is staring at a muted T.V. Channel displaying a news broadcast of an oil spill. A fizzing effervescent tablet in a glass of waters sit on his coffee table, which is shaped like a child's face and is crying glass tears. The fizzing sound is all encompassing.

There is a Buzz on his intercom.

THE SECRETARY

There's a gentleman at reception for you, he says you were out for drinks with his Boss last night?

THE LEADER

Oh... Uhhh... yeah send him in.

The Leader downs his hangover cure drink, stands up, buttons up his shirt, and puts on a tie.

He then walks around his desk area, sits behind his desk to pretend he's doing some work.

KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

Yes, come in.

In walks The Advisor, 45, confidant and bursting with an infectious enthusiasm. He's dressed in a suit, with a grandad shirt and moccasin shoes. This kind of smart / casual look is ideal for a man who works out of the public eye. He speaks like someone who's drank one too many espresso's.

THE ADVISOR

Here I am!

THE LEADER

Ah, The prodigal son returns.. I see.

The Leader, trying to hide his hangover, stands up and walks over to The Advisor. Instead of a normal handshake their hands glide then slap. This is their elite university social club hand shake.

THE ADVISOR

I believe congratulations are in order!

THE LEADER

Thank you.

The leader then leans half sitting on his desk. For a moment they just look at each other.

THE ADVISOR

So a big sesh last night eh?

THE LEADER

I was only going to have a single drink but... you know how it is... one thing led to another.

THE ADVISOR

You gotta celebrate somehow, right?!

THE LEADER

Yes. Thanks by the way... I appreciate those articles you wrote about me.

THE ADVISOR

Anything for an old school chum.

THE LEADER

God... it really has been too long, hasn't it?

THE ADVISOR

Ten years, brother, ten long years.

THE LEADER

But, why are you here?

THE ADVISOR

I've made a pilgrimage here today to further offer my services to you.

THE LEADER

Of course you have.

Beat.

But your services aren't wanted or needed.

THE ADVISOR

I know, I already heard about your meeting last night with the boss, but-

THE LEADER

You've come to try and change my mind then?

THE ADVISOR

You could say that.

THE LEADER

I've already got an incredible team of people here helping me. The construction of the new future... is going very smoothly.

Even he doesn't really know what that means.

THE ADVISOR

Yes, I'm well aware. But haven't you got your work cut out?



THE LEADER

Meaning?

THE ADVISOR

It's just... There are forces present with invested interests against you.

Beat.

They lack faith in you're ability to build on your fathers legacy. You must prove them wrong, at any cost. The sowed seed of discord is present at every step!

THE LEADER

What people?  
(Frowning.)

THE ADVISOR

Others in the media sphere, who freely cast their doubts. These voices drift through corridors... forever present. But I do not doubt brother, I believe... I believe in you. I always have done. It's crystal clear that you are just as great a man as he was.

THE LEADER

My Dad... he was always so fond of you. He once told me you'd be the perfect face of this party.

THE ADVISOR

When he died... I felt such an immense loss.  
(Genuine)

THE LEADER

We all did.

THE ADVISOR

Without doubt, the greatest leader this state ever had.

As he says this he waxes his finger, in total surety.

THE LEADER

He was a man of the people.

THE ADVISOR

And they loved him for it!

They both pause as The leader is slow nodding, clearly dwelling on this thought.

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)

You know... It is such a shame we lost contact after University.

THE LEADER

Life sends us all in different directions.

THE ADVISOR

I look back on those days with immense fondness. They really were our golden years!

THE LEADER

Us against the world!

THE ADVISOR

And to think, you actually married your uni sweetheart!

THE LEADER

Well, She was the hottest girl on campus.

THE ADVISOR

She still is!

The advisor crudely winks at him. The Leader smirks.

THE LEADER

What exactly was it you too fell out about all those years ago? I can't seem to remember.

THE ADVISOR

Some student union row... She had one too many cocktails, I believe.

THE LEADER

She still has a penchant for the occasional bloody Mary!

THE ADVISOR

Who can blame her? I'd murder one right now!

They both pause to chuckle at their perceived humour.

THE LEADER

Let's cut to the chase. What exactly can you offer me that others can't?

THE ADVISOR

I can help ensure through my innumerable media contacts that the papers and public stay on side.

THE LEADER

Clearly... I've been doing just fine keeping them on side.

THE ADVISOR

Your in power now brother, the same rules no longer apply. You've got to anticipate attacks from all angles. Even... from within!

THE LEADER

What would you advise?

THE ADVISOR

We just need to keep the media fed on daily factoids of information, and if they don't swallow, we'll freeze them out... that will be their diet. I'll work alongside your script writer to ensure the slogans and rhymes sound true.

The Advisor slaps his hands together.

The Leader pauses to think. He coyly walks around to look out the windows. The Advisor follows.

THE LEADER

There is so much that I need, that I want, to do... but so little time.

THE ADVISOR

Time is what we all want most... but so freely waste. Never forget that.

The Leader continues to stare out the window, for a moment they are both silent, then he turns around.

THE LEADER

On a conditional basis, I could give you a shot. But the condition is loyalty; loyalty is sacrosanct.

THE ADVISOR  
I will be your loyal servant.

The Advisor reaches out and grabs his hands.

THE LEADER  
Well then... for now... we have a deal.

THE ADVISOR  
Ahhh, yes! The chum network are making their comeback! Together we stand! Together we stand!

As he says this he grabs The Leaders shoulders and shakes him.

THE LEADER  
Divided we fall!

The Leader grabs him back and they shake each other, grinning with the kind of enthusiasm usually associated with sports games.

CUT TO:

INT. CABINET MEETING ROOM - DAY

The sounds of palms banging tables. The Whole cabinet which consists of 25 men and women, dressed in suits, are assembled and waiting in an a large office space. In front of them are place cards saying their job title; MINISTER FOR HEALTH, etc.

They sit around a half circle table, in the middle is an empty chair. The vector light rays where the opening scene took place, are behind the middle of the table where The Leader's empty seat is.

The Leader strides into the room and they all stand up in enthusiastic acknowledgement, giving cheer.

They then all start to sing a cappella, a national anthem of sorts, led by The Leader, who stands in the middle.

EVERYONE  
Together we will flourish,  
And truth we shall nourish...

The Minister for Health sings the next line in a particularly low tone:

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH  
Never, ever, unprepared...

EVERYONE  
We are the people,  
Who serve the nation,  
Forever from our noble station...

The Minister for Conflict sings the next line in a high tone:

THE MINISTER FOR CONFLICT  
And our enemies who Try,  
To catch us as we fly...

EVERYONE  
Shall never succeed,  
As we are what the citizens need.

They all look around, some drained of energy, some enthusiastic. They now sit down.

THE LEADER  
Right, now to business. First: Well done everyone, we did it! Now nothing is stopping us moving forward with the reforms this country deeply craves... and with a majority that the opposition could only have in their most lurid of wet dreams.

They all laugh, some fake, some genuine, but all acutely aware that his jokes need to be laughed at.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
Ladies and Gentlemen, I also want to introduce you to my new advisor, who I'm sure some of your are already familiar.

The Leader gently waves his hand and looks forward.

The Advisor is standing, leaning against a wall with two state flags, on poles, placed equidistant on either side of him. He smiles, nods and then puts his hand in air, a meek wave.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
Don't be shy my man, go around, say hello.

The Advisor walks around and shakes the hand of every single person who is sitting around the table.

Some greet him with suspicion, some like a long lost friend.

This takes an awkward amount of time.

Afterwards he joins The Leader, sitting on his right.

The Deputy, who sits on the left, gently says to The Leader:

THE DEPUTY

Why wasn't I consulted on this?

THE LEADER

Excuse me?

(Indignant)

THE DEPUTY

It's common courtesy to run all new members of the team via me.

THE LEADER

And who exactly are you?

(Rhetorical)

THE DEPUTY

Excuse me?

Everyone is watching this exchange, some look at each other and widen their eyes, as if to say 'What the hell'.

THE LEADER

Your position, man: say it.

THE DEPUTY

Well, I'm the deputy, of course.  
Second in command.

THE LEADER

And that makes me...

THE DEPUTY

The Leader. First in command.

THE LEADER

Exactly: I'm the top of the pyramid, I run this show. You of all people should know that.

THE DEPUTY

Yes... you're right, sorry.

This exchange has significantly dampened the mood of the room. Everyone now feels very awkward, apart from The Advisor who tried to hide his amusement.

THE MINISTER FOR CONFLICT  
There's no need for us to fight and  
fall out on the first day of  
together now is there?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH  
No, of course not!

THE ADVISOR  
Yes, no reason.

THE LEADER  
It's all just fun and games, isn't  
it? Everyone?

The Leader looks around around the room.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION  
Yes, just a little play!

THE DEPUTY  
We can talk later, more privately.  
I think that would be more  
appropriate.

The leader looks at him and apologetically nods, realising he  
has actually crossed a line.

THE LEADER  
Now, moving forward. Our foreign  
engagements, how are they  
progressing?

THE MINISTER FOR CONFLICT  
I'm afraid to say that, as  
expected, things have gotten  
significantly worse before I am  
sure they will, no doubt, improve.

THE LEADER  
In what way?

THE MINISTER FOR CONFLICT  
Well, it looks like we're going to  
need to expand the conflict into  
the neighbouring country... as  
anticipated. We're going to need  
you to appear on TV to address the  
citizens living there in the coming  
days, actually.

THE ADVISOR

I'll help with that, I'll write a stirring and memorable speech. No bother.

THE LEADER

Okay, great. It's regrettable we have to do this, as I am sure we all agree, but no doubt... it is in everyone's best interests.

Everyone collectively murmurs, with eyes moving around the room. However, not everyone seems so sure.

THE DEPUTY

I'll help oversee this address?

THE LEADER

Of course, dear fellow. Your input is always appreciated.

THE ADVISOR

Naturally.

THE LEADER

Good. Okay, everyone: as we move forward with this, I just want you to remember to stick to the script and follow the party line on this. Because there will no doubt be opposition journos who will savage us on this one... we are breaking our first campaign promise after all. But, yes, Most of all: we all need to remember and continue to play our part. Am I Right?

Everyone agrees, and they start banging the table with their palms again.

The images goes out of focus.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GALLERY - DAY

A giant gallery with high ceilings.

A shape shifting electronic tapestry.

The Leader and The deputy meet directly in front of it, and shake hands.



They then walk into another gallery room in which bust sculptures of previous leaders sit on plinths, placed around the room.

These sculptures evoke roman empire aesthetics.

The Leader and The Deputy walk together through the middle of the hall in gentle conversation together.

THE LEADER

I just wanted to offer an apology for the way I spoke earlier. I'm under a lot of pressure to show authority, sometimes... I behave out of character.

THE DEPUTY

You could of at least had the decency to inform me you were hiring a new right hand man. Cohesion between all layers of government is incredibly important. Your father knew that.

THE LEADER

Yes, I know. I'm sorry.

THE DEPUTY

This public infighting must stop! Or we risk becoming no better than a nest of... snakes.

THE LEADER

You're right... I offer you my most sincere of apologies.

THE DEPUTY

We had the same problems when I was in government with your father.

THE LEADER

Oh, really?

THE DEPUTY

But... Always, always he knew how to bring everyone together. You know, Your father really was one of the wisest men I had the privilege of knowing. Do you know what he once told me? He said: 'the foliage of freedom takes time to flourish'.

Beat.

This foliage, this plant, must be carefully cultivated so it's roots can grown strong and remain resolute. We must continue to stand opposed to those enemies of the state, who seek to watch us divided.

THE LEADER

The sowed seed of discord is present everywhere we turn?

THE DEPUTY

Exactly! We must now, solemnly and firmly... considering the magnitude of the acts that we must undertake... stand in total solidarity together.

THE LEADER

Yes. We must.

THE DEPUTY

We must show the same strength and fortitude here, at home, as we do abroad.

THE LEADER

You don't think expanding the conflict is...?

THE DEPUTY

A necessary evil, without doubt. But essential to construct the reality we need.

THE LEADER

Tyranny, terror and lies must be destroyed at all opportunities.

Solemn nodding. They both pause. Then, changing tone:

THE DEPUTY

It's also quite convenient that the country is so rich in natural resources.

THE LEADER

Yes. Killing two birds with one stone, so to speak.

They both solemnly nod together, thinking about how tough their job is. They then stop at one particular bust.

THE DEPUTY  
Ah, here he is.

THE LEADER  
Such a beautiful depiction of my dad.

THE DEPUTY  
You know, he would be so proud of everything you've accomplished.

THE LEADER  
It's a tragedy he never did live long enough to see us take power once more. He woulda really liked that.

They both stare at the bust of The Leaders father, which is like a propped up death mask.

THE DEPUTY  
This was your fathers favourite depiction of himself. He was a big fan of the artist who made it.

Beat.

You should take this bust and move it upstairs to your office. It's important to keep those we love, and cherish, as close as possible.

The Leader then reaches out, put his hand on it's head and closes his eyes.

The Deputy follows as they share this tender moment together.

HOLD on this.

CUT TO:

INT. FILM STUDIO. DAY.

A large CHROMA KEY studio with a chair placed in the middle of this vast environment. The Leader is sitting on a chair, looking sad, preoccupied and ambivalent. The Advisor, on his phone, and The Deputy, silently staring, lean against the walls on opposite sides of the space.

THE CAMERA slowly moves inward.

The Leader is handed a takeaway coffee cup then nods in thanks. THE MAKE-UP ARTIST, 35, beautiful and shy, adds a make-up bib to The Leader and starts to apply make-up to him.

THE LEADER

So, what exactly are you applying to me?

THE MAKE-UP ARTIST

Just a very light foundation, because your skin is so... white.

THE LEADER

I've been told I have a beautiful complexion.  
(Joking)

Beat

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

So... how long have you been a make-up artist?

THE MAKE-UP ARTIST

I got into it quite young.

THE LEADER

I also go into my line of work quite young, as you may know.

The Leader proudly smiles, but The Make-up artist is not impressed. She did not vote for him.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

I'm curious, what would you say is the most difficult thing about your line of work?

MAKE-UP ARTIST

Well, in my profession we're constantly forced to adapt to new technology. With television resolution constantly increasing, you really need to be particularly... meticulous when applying make-up. When you consider the stage lighting and everything as a whole, any blemishes or imperfections can really show up. So you cant just pile it on, It's all about careful blending.

THE LEADER

Yeah, the first time I saw myself  
in 4K...

The leader stares into the CAMERA which has just finished as  
a MEDIUM SHOT.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

I was shocked.

The Make-up Artist has now finished the application of make-up and leaves. The Leader waits in anticipation. A 10 SECOND COUNTDOWN is given from off screen. As soon as it ends, suddenly the green screen backdrop changes to a subtle gradient background. As The Leader speaks, clearly reading off a teleprompter, SUBTITLES appear below what he says, in Sabaeen.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

We wake up today in both a freer  
and safer world. As a long era  
ends, a new era begins. Soon, the  
future of your country will belong  
to you. We wish to assure you that  
along with our new package of  
reforms, we will respect your rich  
traditions and way of life. Our  
shared enemy is gone, and our  
reluctant duty is nearing  
completion. No longer will you  
remain captives of tyranny.

Over the course of our continued  
involvement we will continue to act  
as a compassionate mediators. Our  
priority is to ensure that minimum  
collateral damage is done in the  
mean time, as this process is  
completed. Once we have laid the  
foundations for our future mutual  
prosperity, we will not remain a  
day longer than is necessary. We  
promise not to let history repeat  
itself.

The past was theirs, the present is  
ours, but the future will be yours.  
Thank you.

The Leader stares into the camera. The broadcast ends and the  
background disappears. Realising it's finished, he let's out  
a sigh of relief.

Now we see The Leaders P.O.V. The Advisor and The Deputy stand on either side of the The Camera / Teleprompter. 'The Future will be yours' still reads on the glass. They both start to clap.

THE ADVISOR

Bravo brother! You nailed it in one take.

THE DEPUTY

Yes... quite good.

THE ADVISOR

Quite? He killed it!

THE DEPUTY

Yes, his performance was brilliant. It's just... Well, I think it's better not to mention the package of reforms.

THE ADVISOR

Nonsense! Honestly always triumphs. These people will appreciate it.

THE DEPUTY

We usually... don't mention the reforms so blatantly.

THE ADVISOR

Yes, I'm aware but... This a new way of doing stuff.

THE DEPUTY

What do you think?

THE LEADER

Uhhh.

The Leader pauses to think.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

I agree with you, best we speak the truth.

THE DEPUTY

Okay... So be it.  
(Annoyed)

THE ADVISOR

Glad we all agree then!  
Onwards and upwards?

THE DEPUTY

Yes.

THE LEADER

Plus Gentleman: the clock is  
ticking. Time is of the essence...

The Leader claps his hands together.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

We do have a ball that we must  
attend!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BALL ROOM - EVENING

The ball room is a vast expansive space, a contemporary hall of mirrors. First: we hear music. On the stage a band is playing with THE SINGER, who evokes a young Grace Jones, sings 'I've seen that face before':

THE SINGER

Strange, I've seen that face  
before,  
Seen him hanging 'round my door,  
Like a hawk stealing for the prey,  
Like the night waiting for the  
day...

As this song plays out, we out move out from her face, revealing the space and those who inhabit it.

Around 100 of the state elite are here to celebrate the new government. Most men are dressed in tuxedos, some wear formal military clothes with medals and ceremonial swords. Most of the women wear elegant gowns, although a few wear suits. The lighting creates a warm glow that flatters everyone.

In the middle The Leader and The Wife meet and take eat others hands and then begin an extremely confidant dance routine. Watching from the side: All eyes are on them.

THE WIFE

It's awkward being centre of  
attention like this!

The Leader pulls her out, Then pulls her back, and twirls her:

THE LEADER

It's tough, but we've got to just  
embrace it!

The Leader is clearly loving this, The Wife too.

They continue to dance in an incredibly well choreographed way.

They spin and move in and out of each other.

Clearly they have both had dance classes.

The song plays out as they dance then finishes.

Then on to a slower number and they start to slow dance.

They are then joined by other couples including The Deputy and his Wife.

The Leader and The wife are now having a more close conversation.

THE WIFE

I still can't believe we've made it  
this far together. We've  
weathered.... so many storms.

THE LEADER

I still vividly remember the first  
time I saw your face... I was  
determined to make you mine.  
You know, I used to walk around the  
corridors at university... hoping I  
would bump into you.

THE WIFE

I prayed I would bump into you too.  
Everyone knew who you were.

She strokes his hair in affection.

THE WIFE (CONT'D)

The son of our countries most  
eminent leader.

THE LEADER

Well you didn't half play hard to  
get!

THE WIFE

A gal can't put out too easily. You  
know that.



The Wife notices The Advisor who stands watching them.

THE WIFE (CONT'D)

What is HE doing here?

THE LEADER

Oh, yes... We've rekindled our friendship... I've hired him as my new advisor actually.

The Leader has just realised he forgot to tell her.

THE WIFE

Why? The man is totally revolting. He's a fucking creep.

The wife looks visibly sickened, as if shes just tasted some rotten milk.

THE LEADER

It's just business, darling. I need the best team that I can get and he's already proving to be a star player.

THE WIFE

But you know I hate him. You could have at least had the decency to tell me.

THE LEADER

I am telling you.

Beat.

I'm telling you right now.

THE WIFE

I can't stand to even look at him.

THE LEADER

You're over reacting. What exactly was it you two fell out about anyway?

THE WIFE

I don't want to talk about it. The past is the past.

THE LEADER

It's all water under the bridge surely? It's not healthy to hold a grudge throughout life.

He rubs her arms.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
It eats away at you.

THE WIFE  
Yes, but some things... are not so easily forgiven.

THE LEADER  
Such as?

THE WIFE  
Look, just drop it.

THE LEADER  
Okay. Sorry, sure thing. Will you forgive me?

THE WIFE  
Yes, I understand the party must... come first.

They both continue to dance in silence for a bit longer.

THE SOUND OF A SPOON HITTING A GLASS.

The Deputy is on stage, by the microphone, about to make a speech.

THE DEPUTY  
If I could just get everyone's attention!

Everyone stops what they're doing and gathers round facing his direction. The Deputy is slightly drunk.

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
Being here today, with you all, fills me with an immense feeling of joy. To see a boy that I've known since he was just a young whipper snapper grown up to become, against all obstacles, the leader of this country is a... remarkable thing.

The Deputy is getting slightly emotional.

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
I just want you to know that I am so proud of you, that we are all so proud of you... and if your father could be here today: he would be proud of you.

The deputy nods, trying to remain composed as he finishes.  
Everyone starts clapping.

As The Leader sheds a single tear that runs down his face,  
hands come out from both sides to pat his shoulders and rub  
his head.

CUT TO:

LATER.

The Leader and The Advisor, both clearly drunk, are now  
sitting around a table. Above them is a mirror reflecting  
what they are looking at: other people dancing, some slightly  
swaying, clearly also drunk.

The Advisor has assembled half empty wine glasses and has  
fashioned a Glass harp out of them, and is making music by  
playing them with his fingers. After playing a simple tune,  
rather impressively, He stops playing around and they both  
giggle.

THE LEADER

Ahhh, the art of instrumentation! I  
remember you used to do that at  
school... late heady nights in our  
boarding house.

(Slurring)

THE ADVISOR

I was famous for it!

THE LEADER

It's a shame we hardly spoke then.

THE ADVISOR

You were two years bellow....  
Beside we did speak! When you were  
assigned to clean my dorm.

THE LEADER

Oh... I suppose.

Beat.

Do you remember that time, when  
that little pipsqueak... what was  
his name... and we shaved off one  
of his eyebrows.

THE ADVISOR

Yes! And the next day, he came to  
choir practice with it drawn on  
with black permanent marker!

THE LEADER  
But his hair was blonde, so it was  
noticeable a mile off!

They are both creasing themselves laughing.

THE ADVISOR  
He burst into tears!

The Leader stops laughing.

THE LEADER  
I do actually feel a little guilty  
about that.

THE ADVISOR  
Guilty? Nonsense! It was character  
building.

THE LEADER  
Yes, I suppose sometimes you gotta  
put people in their place.

The Deputy now comes into view in the mirror above them, he  
is dancing with his wife, directly in front of them.

THE ADVISOR  
Well, you put him well and truly in  
his place earlier. Was wonderful to  
watch, actually.

THE LEADER  
Yes. He has this tendency to try  
and dominate a situation. He's part  
of the old order... best friend of  
my dad, actually.

THE ADVISOR  
Is that why you keep him around?

THE LEADER  
I suppose it is, yeah.

THE ADVISOR  
Remember, just keep him involved as  
long as he serves a good purpose.  
Cut him out if he doesn't.

THE LEADER  
I'm not sure I could ever... cut  
him out.

THE ADVISOR  
Sometimes, one must be ruthless.  
For the sake of the party that is.

THE LEADER  
Yes, but on reflection... I was  
maybe too harsh the other day.

THE ADVISOR  
He publicly questioned your  
authority. On the first cabinet  
meeting, no less.

THE LEADER  
He helped build this party! He has  
nothing but good intentions for it.  
He held my hand along the path  
towards power. Where would we be  
without men like him?

THE ADVISOR  
The problem is, the old order often  
struggles to adapt and change. This  
party must remain in constant flux.  
We've got to shape shift with the  
time!

THE LEADER  
We are history's actors.

THE ADVISOR  
How very... profound.

The Leader stands up, stretching and yawning.

THE LEADER  
Yes, anyway... I'm drunk and I also  
appear to have lost my wife.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LEADERS BEDROOM.

The wife is lying on the bed, wearing a nighty and a FACE  
MASK with CUCUMBER PIECES on her eyes. The TV is on:

THE NEWS  
So, just what makes our new leader  
tick? Well, they say his loving  
wife who has supported him all the  
way is the most important character  
in his life.

(MORE)

THE NEWS (CONT'D)

They met when they were just 22 years old, at our countries most prestigious university.

On The broadcast are old vintage, dog eared photographs of The Leader and The Wife frolicking together, young, carefree and in love.

THE NEWS (CONT'D)

"She really is his rock. They love each other so deeply, together through thick and thin." - University friend. They say he first wooed her by making a path of flower petals towards a champagne picnic. After that they had a whirlwind romance that continues to this day.

The broadcast finishes. She turns off the channel and sits in silence a few moments longer.

The Leader comes in drunk.

THE LEADER

Where the fuck did you run off to?

She takes off the cucumbers.

THE WIFE

Oh, I just came up to chill out a bit.

THE LEADER

Are you annoyed at me?

THE WIFE

No... I am fine.

She get's up, goes to the bathroom to remove her mask.

THE LEADER

You are aren't you?

No response.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

Talk to me! COMMUNICATION IS A KEY ELEMENT OF A HEALTHY MARRIAGE!

Beat.

A KEY ELEMENT!  
(shouting)

The wife sticks her head out of the bathroom door, half her face mask is removed.

THE WIFE

I just... I can't believe you hired that... goon to be your new spin doctor. You know I hate him with every fibre of my being.

THE LEADER

I have to put the party first now... before both of us!

The wife now says whilst brushing her teeth:

THE WIFE

Whatever.

THE LEADER

Tomorrow morning we can all meet... you two can kiss and make up?

Beat.

I'll be a compassionate mediator!

The wife spits out her toothpaste.

THE WIFE

I don't think that's necessary!

THE LEADER

Please Darling, do this one tiny thing, for me! For us!

THE WIFE

I do plenty for you... and us.

THE LEADER

You two fell out over 20 years ago!

Beat.

Time heals all wounds!

Beat.

Please!

THE WIFE

Okay... Fine, I'll meet with him! Let's not talk about it anymore.

THE LEADER

Alright!

The Leader is relieved. He's clearly also very wasted.

The wife comes back, get's into bed, turns on her side.  
Clearly she is not okay.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
So... Would you like to make love?

THE WIFE  
Nah. I'm good. Thanks.

THE LEADER  
Oh, you're not still mad are you?

THE WIFE  
No. I'm just fine. Just tired.

THE LEADER  
Okay.

He turns on his side, still dressed in his tuxedo, and starts  
to fall asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE

The Leader is barefoot and walking on water, like Jesus in  
the new testament.

The sun is setting, reflecting on the water, the image of  
this doubling itself.

He comes to an oil spill.

Scattered on the oil are blank white masks.

He walks though the oil, with it sticking to his feet.

He reaches down and picks up a mask.

He turns it round, The oil on it drips down, creating a kind  
of black shape shifting liquid.

He put it on and stands in the oil.

He starts to sink into the oil / water.

At first he struggles, then he accepts.

Eventually he's totally at peace with this.



We watch him sink until he's completely gone.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LEADERS OFFICE.

The Wife stares, out of office window, waiting.

The Leader is lying on the sofa.

THE WIFE  
The bastards late.

THE LEADER  
I know... sorry. I just thought if  
I arranged a meet between the two  
of you we could straighten this  
whole mess out.

THE WIFE  
There's nothing to straighten  
out... besides it's you working  
with him not me.

THE LEADER  
I know... it's just that the nature  
of this game... no doubt he will be  
around a lot. The last thing I want  
is for you to be uncomfortable.

THE WIFE  
Yes, I'm sure.

The leader looks at his watch.

THE LEADER  
He should arrive any minute.

They stand around for 30 seconds.

THE ADVISOR  
Hi! Look, I understand why you've  
called this meeting-

THE LEADER  
In order for us to move forward,  
without conflict, We need to clear  
up what happened in the past  
between you two.

THE ADVISOR

You're so right. I just want to offer my unreserved apologies to you. I behaved very badly, I was very drunk... but I'm aware that's not an excuse. Can you accept my apology?

THE WIFE

For the sake of the party, I will try to put our differences aside.

THE ADVISOR

Thank you.

THE LEADER

Brilliant! Okay, shake hands guys.

They shake hands like kids forced to make up in school.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

Brilliant! Now, we're meeting one of our top generals for dinner this evening, Why don't you join us?

THE WIFE

It's not really my place.

THE LEADER

Please, now that you two have made up?

THE WIFE

Yes, sure.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - EVENING

The situation room is a secluded windowless office space where "situations" military can be discussed and watched. A long table sits in the middle, with chairs and flat screen T.V's surrounding the walls. Stock Market Data streams across the walls.

The Leader / The Advisor / The Deputy / The Wife are Meeting The General, 60, thin and weathered. He wears a military uniform with pride. They all start shaking hands.

THE GENERAL

Heavy one last night?

THE LEADER

Yes... We're all still recovering!

THE GENERAL

You look just devine, darling.  
(To the wife)

THE WIFE

Yes, nice to see you too.

They all sit down and look at there menu's.

THE CHEF

I just wanted to come out and say  
hello. Can I just say, that It is  
such an honour to cook for somebody  
whose done so much for this  
country... I am glad to be able to  
give back.

THE LEADER

Oh, you are too kind! So what are  
making us?

THE CHEF

To start: Caesar Salad with  
homemade focaccia croutons topped  
with parmigiano-reggiano.

For mains we have the choice  
between: Pan-seared Dover Sole with  
champagne sauce, Herb-roasted new  
potatoes, Haricots verts,  
Thumbelina Carrots.

Or:

Dry Aged Prime Strip Steak, Whipped  
Potatoes and Roasted Root  
Vegetables.  
Would you like me to read the  
deserts-

THE ADVISOR

Oh, is there not a vegetarian  
option?

THE DEPUTY

Can't you just eat the fish?

THE ADVISOR

Pescatarians eat fish, not  
vegetarians. A Common  
misconception.

THE CHEF

I can-

THE LEADER

You're a vegetarian? This is news to me... Why?

THE ADVISOR

I just think it's wrong to kill sentient animals for the sake of our eating pleasure. Besides, we live in a world of choice... there's no need for that anymore.

THE GENERAL

Eating animals has been integral to human progress since the dawn of man. You think we would have progressed this far eating only nuts and seeds for sustenance?

THE ADVISOR

Listen, I'm not trying to force my opinions on anybody. You eat what you want!

THE LEADER

Okay, well I'm sure he can arrange a vegetarian option for you. You can do that, can't you?

THE CHEF

Yes, that's no problem at all.

THE LEADER

Okay, I'll have a steak then. Rare!

THE GENERAL

Make that two!

THE WIFE

I'll have the fish, please.

THE ADVISOR

I'll have roasted vegetables with... mashed vegetables.

The Chef nods, then leaves to go begin preparing their meals.

THE GENERAL

At least your not a bloody vegan. Vegans are always trying to force their opinions on everybody. They're becoming increasingly militant!

THE LEADER

I agree. Maybe we could pass some kind of anti-vegan activism law?

THE ADVISOR

You're not going to find me agreeing with that.

THE WIFE

My yoga teacher is a vegan... He totally swears by it.

THE GENERAL

Now yoga! That's something I've always wanted to try.

THE WIFE

I've been doing it a number of years now... it's really helped sort out my sleeping pattern actually.

THE GENERAL

Oh, really? Because I do have trouble sleeping at night.

THE WIFE

I'll give you my man's number! He can really do wonders for you.

THE LEADER

I never managed to get into yoga.

THE WIFE

You only did it once. It takes some time before you really see the benefits.

THE ADVISOR

Sauna is my thing. I love to just sit there naked for what feels like hours... sweat dripping from my pours.

The starter arrives.

The General squints his eyes and nods at this, whilst the Leader and The wife both look slightly grossed out at this thought just before they start eating.

THE LEADER

Now, we really should move on to business. Tell me: what's the news from the front?

He points a fork at him.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
Give me the digest.

THE GENERAL  
Well, unfortunately... There continues to be conflict and complications. What we did not anticipate was the general populations resistance to our presence in their country. It has come as quite a surprise to me that these people are not... more grateful.

THE DEPUTY  
This was to be expected, surely? Things usually get worse before better?

THE GENERAL  
We need to continue aiding and promoting those who are willing to cooperate with us.

The groups that aren't willing to cooperate: we will foster distrust and enmity between them.

He pause to eat.

THE GENERAL (CONT'D)  
But don't get me wrong, I Am optimistic about the future.

THE DEPUTY  
We will Soon be able to stretch our legs across this new sovereign land.

THE LEADER  
It's important we keep moving forward with plans.  
We need to remain icons of... perseverance.

THE ADVISOR  
It's essential we fight against this regions antagonist tendencies.

Solemn nodding. They are all eating now and talking between swallowing.

THE DEPUTY

They never learn though, do they?  
I've been at this for my whole  
career... It feels like eternal  
Déjà vu.

THE WIFE

I think this part of the world will  
probably always have these issues.  
But... you have got to try and make  
the world a better place.

THE DEPUTY

Regime change is always a messy  
business.

He says this with food on his chin.

THE GENERAL

This is really good ceasar salad by  
the way!

The Camera moves in a 360 degree circle as they talk, we see  
a clock fast forward in time an hour.

When we return they are sitting in the similar positions but  
now finishing desert.

THE GENERAL (CONT'D)

I've just been informed that our  
latest drone strike is ready to go  
and we can watch it if we like? I  
thought it could be a fun way to  
end the evening?

THE ADVISOR

Great idea!

THE DEPUTY

Now? Don't be absurd, I haven't  
even finished desert.

THE LEADER

In lieu of after dinner  
entertainment...

THE DEPUTY

Doing it now isn't right! A  
targeted assassination now... Will  
leave a bad taste in the mouth.

THE ADVISOR

You sure that's not your carnivore  
conscious speaking?

THE GENERAL

This is our enemy we're talking about here. They'd do the same to us if they only had the chance.

THE WIFE

Come on, let's do it!

THE DEPUTY

Well I'm not going to watch it.

THE LEADER

Why on earth not?

THE DEPUTY

It seems to me inappropriate.

THE ADVISOR

Your just afraid to get your hands dirty!

The Deputy stands up to leave.

THE LEADER

Sit down!

THE ADVISOR

He told you to sit down.

THE DEPUTY

I'm aware of what he said, but I've decided to take my leave.

THE ADVISOR

You'd do well to do as your told once in a while.

THE DEPUTY

I'm under no obligation to watch some poor bastards be vaporised whilst I digest my meal.

THE GENERAL

They're our enemy though!

THE DEPUTY

I'm aware, but ending human life shouldn't be taken in such a light fashion.

THE GENERAL

Listen, these people are snakes, they slither in the sand...

(MORE)



THE GENERAL (CONT'D)

The rules of conflict don't apply to them.

THE LEADER

You do know human life is valued differently over there?

THE WIFE

That's true!

THE ADVISOR

I'm afraid I'm off, I bid you farewell everyone.

The Advisor leaves in disgust.

A screen from the ceiling slowly lowers itself into place.

THE LEADER

Geez, what's his problem?

THE ADVISOR

He does always seem to feel the need to get up on his high horse.

THE GENERAL

Quite.

THE ADVISOR

I mean come on, it's not like he hasn't seen this all before?

THE GENERAL

He's just trying to exert some kind of moral superiority. You get men like that in the army... they don't last long.

THE LEADER

I do wonder how long he will last sometimes.

THE ADVISOR

He's part of the old way-

THE GENERAL

Ah we're ready, any second now!

On the screen we can see a black and white grainy image, a birds eye view perspective of a gathering of people.

GENERAL

First we shine a laser on our targets.

(MORE)

GENERAL (CONT'D)

We call that the eye of god. It's  
the last thing these savages will  
ever see.

The targets are hit.

The wife covers her mouth, at first it seems in shock but  
she's actually yawning.

The advisor makes a pow sound.

The Leader makes an explosion gesture with his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

A pond, overcrowded with exotic fish swimming inside.

We watch this for a while, until two silhouette reflections  
appear on the surface.

Moving up from this we now see the space.

The Leader and The Advisor are in a vast lushes green house,  
with a series of other ponds scattered around.

They look down at the fish.

THE ADVISOR

If you could be reincarnated as any  
animal, what would you be?

THE LEADER

I'd like to be something useful.

Beat.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

Maybe A guide dog? Yeah... that  
would be nice. What about you?

THE ADVISOR

An elephant.

THE LEADER

So you could always be "an elephant  
in the room?"  
(Smirking)

THE ADVISOR

No... because elephant's never  
forget.

THE LEADER  
Elephants also get killed and then  
harvested for their ivory.

THE ADVISOR  
Yes, I know, it's a sickening  
crime.

THE LEADER  
I totally agree.

THE ADVISOR  
Speaking of sickening... the way  
your deputy in command has been  
acting is completely out of order.

THE LEADER  
Yeah, I'm tired of him too.

Beat.

I'm considering letting him go  
actually.

THE ADVISOR  
He won't take that well.

THE LEADER  
I'm well aware.

THE ADVISOR  
If you fire him, Well, there's a  
chance he might become a turncoat.  
No... something more radical may be  
needed.

THE LEADER  
Such as?

THE ADVISOR  
We should expel him from the  
party... that way the criticism he  
levels publicly levels at you won't  
be considered so valid.

THE LEADER  
I couldn't do that... that's a  
little harsh. Don't you think?

THE ADVISOR  
Drastic times call for drastic  
measures!

The Leader stays silent, deep in thought.

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)  
Well, what is to be brother?

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

The Conference Hall is a vast space which sits hundreds at different levels. It is the kind of space where a play could comfortably be put on, but theatre is not it's key purpose.

The Leader / Advisor / Deputy are here to inspect the newly refurbished space.

THE LEADER  
Wow!

THE DEPUTY  
Beautiful isn't it?

THE ADVISOR  
Incredible space... so...  
Expansive.

The Leader turns to the advisor and says:

THE LEADER  
The acoustics here are very famous,  
did you know?

THE ADVISOR  
I can imagine!

THE LEADER  
They've refurbished it so well.

Beat

When I was a child I used to sit  
just up there.

The Leader points up at one of the galleries.

THE DEPUTY  
I know! I sat with you on a number  
of occasions.

THE LEADER  
They were good times!

The Leader sighs nostalgically.

THE DEPUTY  
Well, there's lots more good times  
destined for us ahead!

The Leader and The Advisor say nothing to this and just look  
at each other sheepishly.

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
What?

Beat.

Is there something I'm missing  
here?

THE LEADER  
No... There's nothing you're  
missing.

THE DEPUTY  
What's going on?

THE LEADER  
Nothings going on!

The Advisor whispers loudly to The Leader:

THE ADVISOR  
Shall we just do it now?

The Leader whispers back:

THE LEADER  
But we agreed later?

THE DEPUTY  
Do what later?

THE LEADER  
Okay, go grab a chair.  
(dutifully)

The Leader gestures to The Advisor who grabs a chair from the  
side and places it in the middle of the stage.

THE DEPUTY  
What is this?

THE LEADER  
It's... Best you sit down.

THE DEPUTY  
We've got some bad news for you.

THE LEADER

Unfortunately and reluctantly we have come to the conclusion... solemnly, however fairly, that due to recent developments and... disagreements... you are going to be expelled from The Party.

THE ADVISOR

With all privileges revoked.

The Deputy shakes his head in denial. The Leader and The advisor are now performing a good cop / bad cop routine.

THE DEPUTY

What on earth are you talking about?

THE ADVISOR

Listen: this is easy for none of us.

THE LEADER

I'm afraid you've become a liability to the cohesion of our movement. We knew you wouldn't leave on your own behest... So we've decided to take radical measures.

THE DEPUTY

A Liability? Nonsense. I helped build this party... with my bare hands. And you have the insolence, to call me a liability? To question my loyalty?

THE LEADER

Listen: I am deeply sorry... We are all so grateful for the part you've played till now. But, I'm afraid, You are being cut out.

THE ADVISOR

This a progressive movement! And your views are increasingly... archaic. There's no doubt you were an important character in the past, but you've served your purpose. So do the decent thing, retain some dignity and kindly leave!

The Deputy is now becoming angry.

THE DEPUTY

Leave? How dare you ask me that!

Beat.

You've changed boy! Ever since  
you've allowed this pathetic fool,  
this low rate journalist... this  
conniving slimy little serpent into  
our midst!

THE ADVISOR

Your the antagonist! Not I!

The Advisor taps his chest aggressively.

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)

Not I!

THE DEPUTY

Listen you bastards, you have the  
audacity to try and throw me out of  
a political party that I founded? I  
was running this country while you  
boys were dancing in discos!

THE LEADER

You were a noble architect in the  
past, sure, no doubt, but-

THE ADVISOR

Listen old man: we are very  
grateful, we respect you, and we  
respect everything you've done. But  
you're time has come.

THE DEPUTY

This is a partisan hit squad!  
A character assassination!  
This is a show trial!

The Deputy, aggressively runs his hands through his hair,  
then points.

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)

This is all because I wouldn't eat  
pudding whilst watching a drone  
strike, isn't it? That kind of  
behaviour it's... unreal!

THE LEADER

Unreal? Unreal?! We're an empire!  
When we act: we create our own  
reality!

THE ADVISOR

Don't act like your some kind of sacred saint. This never ending conflict we're stuck in, is an attempt to clean up a mess that you made!

THE DEPUTY

I had my best intentions for the region! How was I supposed to know what would happen? Sure... mistakes were made.

THE ADVISOR

You are a walking mistake!

The Deputy, dumbfounded, now starts bargaining.

THE DEPUTY

But what about the future... The new future?

THE LEADER

The new future? That's just a slogan that we repeat add nauseam. You know as well as I do that it doesn't really mean anything.

THE ADVISOR

There's a future for this party sure... But not with YOU in it!

The Deputy now has tears in his eyes.

THE DEPUTY

If I could just get... some more time?

The leader puts a hand on his shoulder to console him.

THE LEADER

Time waits for no body... But you know that, don't you?  
(Patronising)

THE DEPUTY

If your father... could witness you now.

The Advisor smirks and looks over to The Leader:

THE ADVISOR

The apple falls far, does it brother?



THE DEPUTY  
I cradled you as a child!

The Deputy now starts sobbing.

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
When your father was dying I  
promised him to look out for you...  
and I did.

The Deputy viciously snarls through tears:

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
You think you'd be the leader if I  
hadn't vouched for you with the  
rest of the party? You'd probably  
be nothing more than a low level  
cabinet member if it wasn't for me!  
Or even: just a back bench MP!

The Leader is visibly offended by this comment.

THE LEADER  
Hey! There's no need to be so rude.

THE ADVISOR  
You ought to show some respect! His  
flourishing charisma is what got  
him elected, not your petty hand  
shakes!

THE DEPUTY  
Throwing stones whilst forever  
living in a glass house: that is  
your *raison d'etre*. You've built  
your whole so called career off  
this!

The Deputy shakes his head in disgust.

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
You journalists are all the same!

THE ADVISOR  
Stop being so overly dramatic!  
You've become incongruous! You  
ought to act your age... instead  
you're behaving like a spoilt  
child!

THE LEADER  
Stop making this so hard on  
everyone.

(MORE)

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
We are trying to be polite....  
Please show us the same courtesy.

THE DEPUTY  
What about the committee? I'll  
consult the committee! They won't  
stand for this.

THE LEADER  
I'm afraid... The committee agree's  
with us on this matter. Therefore,  
Your fate is sealed.

THE ADVISOR  
Out with the old...

The advisor wipes his hands.

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)  
In with the new!

The deputy now has accepted his fate and just sits slumped  
with his head in his hands, sobbing.

Behind him is a illuminated sign that reads: EXIT.

They watch him while he cries.

The advisors sticks his hands out in front of him and starts  
rubbing his thumb and index finger together.

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)  
Watch!

The Deputy looks up; a formerly stiff man now broken.

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)  
Watch as I play the worlds smallest  
violin! To serenade your sorrow!

The advisor starts laughing. The Leader looks away in shame.

THE DEPUTY  
You really are a slithering  
serpent! A savage hack!

The Deputy wipes away the tears from his eyes and starts to  
compose himself.

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
Right, well, I won't embarrass  
myself in front of you any longer.

The Deputy has reached acceptance, the final stage of grief.

The Deputy stands up and finishes composing himself.

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
If this is to be my fate, well  
then, so be it.

THE LEADER  
I'm sorry... I never wanted it to  
play out like this.

The Leader looks visibly guilty as he gestures to the door.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
If you could just make your exit...  
we can all move along with our  
lives.

THE DEPUTY  
Fine, I won't trouble you any  
longer.

He takes a long look at both of them and does one nod.

Then he pushes himself down from the stage and walks off up  
the isle towards the exit.

This takes an awkward amount of time as it's quite far away.

The Leader and The Advisor watch in silence as he does this.

When he reaches the door he stops and turns round and puts  
his hands up to his face to elevate his voice:

THE DEPUTY (CONT'D)  
Can I just say one last thing,  
before I go?

The Leader puts his hands up to elevate his voice back:

THE LEADER  
Yes! What is it?

THE DEPUTY  
You're both complete cunts!  
You can both go and fuck  
yourselves!

The deputy slams the door like an angry teenager.

The Leader and the advisor just look at each other in  
disbelief.

INT. THE LEADERS / WIFE BEDROOM.

The Leader comes in, looking drained. He goes into the on suite bathroom and stares at himself in the mirror. Then he does a big toothy grin for a second, then deadpan, then a subtle smile, then deadpan, then a side smile and so on. As he does this The Wife come into frame and watches him from behind. He's unaware he's being watched.

THE WIFE

What on earth are you doing?

THE LEADER

Oh! Nothing... just practicing my smile.

THE WIFE

We already decided which smile was best.

THE LEADER

Yeah, but I was thinking of changing things up again.. Maybe something more toothy?

THE WIFE

No... Stick to the smile we agreed.

THE LEADER

Fine!

The leader lets off a huge sigh, he leaves the bathroom, walks over to the bed and lies on it face down.

THE WIFE

What's wrong?

THE LEADER

Nothing! I AM GREAT!  
(Muffled)

THE WIFE

Clearly... you are not.

THE LEADER

Do you ever feel like you're suffocating under the weight of your own ambition?

THE WIFE

We all have our doubts sure... What makes you say this? You needn't wear your crown so heavy.

THE LEADER

I've just expelled my deputy... and I don't even really know why I did it.

THE WIFE

What the hell are you talking about? Why would you do that?

THE LEADER

Oh yes, now I remember, he kept questioning my authority.

THE WIFE

He was one of the only half decent people in your inner circle... and you've kicked him out? For what? To satisfy this rekindled bromance of yours? You can't only surround yourself with yes men!

THE LEADER

But I like men who say yes! They are my favourite kind!

THE WIFE

Your prerogative is to lead the country into the future... that's your job!

THE LEADER

You know... Sometimes I don't think I'm cut out for this job. Those that try to please everyone always seem to end up pleasing... no one.

THE WIFE

You've worked your whole life towards this point... you were born to lead. Stop this nonsense chat. Go back to practicing your smile, or whatever other weird things you do in private.

THE LEADER

What would you do if I just packed it all in... hypothetically speaking?

THE WIFE

How can you even ask me that?

THE LEADER

It's a fair question! Let's be honest: most politicians end their career in disaster.

THE WIFE

I won't let you end yours in disaster.

THE LEADER

We both know that things can easily get... out of hand.

THE WIFE

You can't let things get out of hand! You gotta maintain control: whatever the cost.

THE LEADER

That's what I AM doing!

THE WIFE

Listen: I took your name in good faith... and I'll be damned if I'm going to stand by your side whilst you ruin it!

THE LEADER

We both know my name, our name, will always be worth something!

THE WIFE

Yes but something isn't enough! Think about your son, think about the social legacy he's going to inherit!

THE LEADER

You don't need to worry about him, he's going to be just fine!

THE WIFE

Fine? No thanks to you!

THE LEADER

What's that supposed to mean?

THE WIFE

Read between the lines!

THE LEADER

No, please tell me oh wise one, what does it say between the lines?

## THE WIFE

You seem to think that an occasional video call is sufficient parental involvement. Well I'm telling you now, it isn't!

## THE LEADER

He's fiercely independent... You don't need to worry about him... I hardly saw my father growing up... and look at me, I turned out beyond brilliant!

## THE WIFE

This dialogue is going nowhere. I'm going to bed.

## THE LEADER

Fine! You do that!

They both get undressed and into bed together. They fall asleep apart.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

DREAM SEQUENCE

A vast empty desert, at dusk.

The leader stands barefoot in the middle of a sand dune.

As he walks through the warm sand he removes his jacket, throwing it to the ground.

A DESERT KINGSLAKE slithers past him in the sand, uninterested with this lost human.

After walking for some time he reaches a tall sand dune.

With some effort he makes his way to the top.

He then trips and slides down the other side of the sand dune.

At the bottom he finds The son, dressed in his school uniform, like The Leader his tie is also missing.

He is sitting playing with the sand.

He picks up a handful of sand and let's it fall through his fingers.

He gently speaks:

THE SON  
An empire built both on... and  
with... sand.

As he says this the sun finishes setting, behind him.

The Leader stands some distance from him, staring up at this.

The wind has now picked up, and is dragging sand from behind him.

Suddenly a green laser from the sky shines down on The Son's head.

This is "The eye of god".

The son looks up at it, opens his mouth letting the green light illuminate the inside.

We hear the sound of an impending drone strike.

Just before it strikes a sudden....

CUT TO:

INT. THE LEADERS BEDROOM - MORNING

The leader jolts awake suddenly from this nightmare with The wife shaking him awake.

THE WIFE  
Honey, wake up! You're going to be  
late for the S-E-E interview.

The leader glares up at her intensely, slightly sweating.

THE WIFE (CONT'D)  
What's wrong darling?

THE LEADER  
Nothing... thank you for waking me  
up.

INT. GREEN ROOM.

The Leader and The Advisor are meeting The Producer, 50, casually slick and privileged in the Green room.

There is a fruit platter and sushi laid out.



THE PRODUCER  
Ah, long time no see!

THE LEADER  
My man!

THE ADVISOR  
Hey Hey! How the devil are you?

They all went to the same prestigious University, so greet each other like lost friends with hugs.

THE PRODUCER  
Great! Just been on the most wonderful skiing holiday with my family actually!

THE ADVISOR  
Oh, wonderful, wow!

THE PRODUCER  
Yeah, we stayed in the most incredible chalet!

THE LEADER  
We went skiing a few times didn't we?  
(To the advisor)

THE ADVISOR  
Yeah, with your dad! Good times!

THE PRODUCER  
You've got many great tales I'm sure! Anyway, to business, your usual interviewer... he's called in sick unfortunately. But I assure you I've got a great replacement.

THE ADVISOR  
Okay, fine, can we see the questions though?

They are handed printed set of questions.

THE PRODUCER  
Here you go.

The Leader now take some time to read them all.

THE LEADER  
Yup, seems fine.

THE ADVISOR

I agree, nothing too difficult here.

THE PRODUCER

Right, let's get to it.

They are led through to the studio where the interview will take place.

The set design evokes has a generic city scape background made up of shadows.

Two chairs sit on either side.

The Journalist, 35, confidant and unfortunately for The Leader, determined to make a name for herself as a serious journalist.

THE JOURNALIST

Hi, nice to meet you!

THE LEADER

You too!

They have a little small talk. Then a countdown until they are live. When they go live a logo appears in the bottom corner that says S.E.E. With each letter segmented in an oval circle, making an eye.

THE JOURNALIST

Hello and welcome to a new episode of 'Real Talk'. Today we're graced with the presence of our new Leader, who is here to reflect on his time in office.

THE LEADER

Hello, thank you for having me.

THE JOURNALIST

So, you and your wife have been happily married for almost 20 years, so I must ask: what is the secret to a fulfilling relationship?

THE LEADER

It's all about communication, and mutual respect... Much like politics actually.

A slick response said with a gentle smile.

THE JOURNALIST

You've spoken a lot about 'The New Future', what exactly do you mean by this concept?

THE LEADER

I mean:

As he makes the following points he touches a different finger moving round his left hand:

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

Equality, meritocracy, integrity, justice and truth. These are the 5 principles of the new future.

THE JOURNALIST

Okay, but those are just concepts, could you be more specific by what you exactly mean?

THE LEADER

Excuse me?

This interview is taking an unexpected turn.

THE JOURNALIST

Well, What do you mean by truth?

THE LEADER

We are and have been for some time: the party of truth. We flourish it... we nourish it.

He says this like a truant pupil who hasn't revised for his exams.

THE JOURNALIST

But there have been allegations, accusations regarding certain statements, statements that have been proven wrong. For example-

THE LEADER

That's just a smear campaign from the opposition! We both know that The opposition are dangerous. The last thing we want is to go back to those bad days, those days we all wish to forget.

This line of questioning is becoming increasingly tense.

## THE JOURNALIST

Your recently fired deputy, who worked closely with your father, described you as "no longer in touch with reality". What is your response to that?

The Leader is incandescent to be asked this.

## THE LEADER

He would say that though wouldn't he? He's a senile old man! Bitter because he's become a citizen of nowhere! We had to expel him, remove him from his position... for making sexist statements. It wasn't an easy decision to make, but we made it... in solidarity with women.

The Leader is on the defence, he says this self righteously.

## THE JOURNALIST

Who do you intend to replace him with?

## THE LEADER

We'll be holding auditions for the part very soon.

The Leader, Faux Calm nodding.

## THE JOURNALIST

One of your campaign promises was to end the war started by your predecessor. But the conflict has continued to escalate and has now moved into the neighbouring country. It continues to escalate into sectarian violence, with allegations of war crimes from both sides. Why did you expand this conflict?

## THE LEADER

Listen: democracy is a messy business, bad things can happen. But these people are now free, free from the tyranny of an authoritarian despot regime. They are now individuals who can make their own decisions.

(MORE)

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

If they choose to do bad things,  
then that's on them and not us.  
Progress... it takes time!

THE JOURNALIST

But, you did break a campaign  
promise on that, didn't you?

THE LEADER

Look: we studied the data, we  
studied the opinion polls. The  
country, the people they are with  
us on this one. It's not easy for  
you cushy journalists in your tower  
of privilege to understand, but  
this is the reality of the  
situation. I'll be damned if in my  
time in office I stand by whilst  
people, anywhere in the world  
suffer. This is the philosophy I  
was brought with!

The leaders public mask is increasingly starting to slip.

THE JOURNALIST

So, to what extend do you see  
yourself continuing to walk the  
path of your father?

THE LEADER

We walk the same path, that's for  
sure.

THE JOURNALIST

Is it true you moved a statue of  
him into your office?

THE LEADER

Yes, I did actually... It was my  
wife's idea.

THE JOURNALIST

It must help with reminding you  
where you've come from and where  
you intend to go?

THE LEADER

I couldn't put it better myself.

Although the interview has become easier again The Leaders  
remains visibly pissed off.

THE JOURNALIST

Thank you, and good luck with the rest of your time in office.

THE LEADER

Thank you too.

SOMEONE SHOUTS OUT CUT.

They are no longer live on air.

Although the camera is still on.

The Leader Bursts into rage.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

Those weren't the agreed questions?  
What the fuck was that?

The leader stands up, and aggressively points at her.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

I could have you turned into a  
WALKING TALKING MEME! I have the  
power to do that! You worthless  
fucking woman.

The Leader walks off set, we follow him as he walks away.

The production crew all look on a mixture between shocked /  
disgusted / amused.

The Leader storms off into the green room.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)

What on earth was that?

THE PRODUCER

I'm sorry, I had no idea she-

THE LEADER

I have enough on my plate without  
having to answer difficult  
questions from some higher than  
thou journalist... I'm trying to  
run this country!

THE ADVISOR

The bitch will never interview you  
again! We'll be sure of that.

THE LEADER  
Have you forgotten who funds this  
channel? Who pays your salary?

THE PRODUCER  
The public pays-

THE ADVISOR  
Only as long as we allow it!

THE LEADER  
You won't be going on anymore  
skiing holdiday's, with your cunt  
wife and bastard children! Tell  
them that when you go home tonight!

THE PRODUCER  
I'm sorry... we can figure this  
out!

The Producer has tears in his eyes.

THE LEADER  
I'm done with this shit! I'm  
switching off!

CUT TO:

INT. LEADERS OFFICE

A View from above of the Leaders coffee table. A pile of  
newspapers all with him on the front cover. Headlines  
include:

"MEME THREAT"

"LEAKED FOOTAGE SHOWS ANGRY TIRADE"

"A WALKING, TALKING MEME"

"LEADER'S MASK SLIPS"

The Leader looks sleep deprived and his sunburst logo badge  
is upside down.

He stares at the stack of papers.

He then starts slowly ripping out the images of himself,  
putting them in his mouth, eating them and swallowing.

This goes on for sometime.

Whilst chewing he looks up at someone who has walked into the room.

THE ADVISOR

I haven't seen you chew your face like that since our student union in the 1980's. What on earth are you doing?

The leaders response is muffled through chewing.

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)

Stop playing around man and pull yourself together! How were we to know somebody would hack into and leak the feed? Besides, I've brought some whiskey for you... to drown your sorrows.

The Leader again responds with strange noises.

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I tried to suppress the story, but once you go viral.. You go viral. But really, 'walking meme', what did you even mean by that?

(Laughing)

THE LEADER

I guess... I'm not even sure... It just came out.

The Advisor pours two very large glasses of whiskey.

The Leader snatches the glass and downs it instantly.

THE ADVISOR

Whoa, slow down brother!

THE LEADER

As your boss, I order you to make me another. And I order you to down yours.

THE ADVISOR

Well, alright, are we going to play a drinking game?

The Leader just claps his hands.

The Advisor downs his drink.

The Leader takes his next drink, and downs it again.



He get's up and walks around his office.

Facing away from The Advisor he says:

THE LEADER  
I'm sorry to break this to you.  
But.. This isn't working out.

THE ADVISOR  
Isn't working out... are You  
breaking up with me?  
(Joking)

The Leader turns around possessed with anger.

THE LEADER  
I want to say it's not YOU it's  
ME.. But it is you.. It's  
definitely you.

THE ADVISOR  
I've hardly even started working  
here...

THE LEADER  
I'm s-o-r-r-y.

THE ADVISOR  
Will you give me another chance?  
Please?

THE LEADER  
What part of no is unclear to you?!  
The 'N' or the 'O'?!  
[Pause]

THE ADVISOR  
Well... Will you at least give me a  
good reference... For my Curriculum  
vitae?

THE LEADER  
Yes of course... here you go:

The Leader put his hands to make quotation marks.

THE LEADER (CONT'D)  
"As a journalist: a useless hack.  
As an advisor: endless... SHIT  
advice. Signed: The leader of this  
country."

THE ADVISOR

Hey I tried my best! It's not my  
fault you can't control your temper  
when under scrutiny!

He walks over to him and starts tapping his chest as he says  
the following:

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)

But that always was your problem,  
wasn't it? Ever since school you've  
always crumbled under scrutiny.

He then crosses a line, He flick's the leaders nose.

THE LEADER

AAAAH!

The Leader puts a leg under The Advisor and pushed him,  
throwing him to the ground. He's using a move he learnt in  
karate class when he was a teenager.

The Advisor lies on the floor in agony, like a footballer  
begging the referee to send a player off for a minor foul.

THE ADVISOR

You bastard! You almost killed me!

The Advisor regains some composure but remains on the  
carpet.

The leader is out of the frame.

The curtains behind the advisor are closed, forming a kind of  
backdrop.

The Advisor starts bitterly speaking:

THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)

You know what I've never  
understood... Is why you never  
properly asked me why your wife  
hates me? You really think it was  
just some student union argument?

As he speaks the Leaders feet walk into frame as he comes  
over to the advisor.

I suspect you know that isn't the  
truth! The truth is, one night  
whilst you were passed out shit  
faced drunk we went back to hers.

(MORE)

## THE ADVISOR (CONT'D)

At first.. She didn't want to...  
but I convinced...

The camera pans up and we see The Leader is holding the statue of his father, high enough so it's just in front of his face, forming a kind of mask.

He then instantly drops it on top of The Advisor, who out of frame has just had his skull crushed.

The Leader stands with his palms open with a look of serene bliss on his face.

He then walks over to lean on his desk.

His back is just against the frame of the film.

He breathes heavily.

Then: He takes out his phone and makes a selfie of himself.

Then we cut behind him as he does this, and we can see the statue in the right corner of the frame, surrounded by a moving pool of thick blood, with the leader on the left, we see his face in the screen of the camera.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. ?

Close up of the Leaders face who stands illuminated by light.

For a moment it looks like he's in a police interrogation, but as we move around him we realise he is on a stage, being watched by a large ground of standing people, all members of The Party.

## THE LEADER

We are gathered here today, to pay our respects to a man who was a brother, a son, a journalist, an advisor but most of all: a loyal party member.

It brings me, innumerable sadness to find out that in an act of ruthless politically motivated, senseless violence my dear friend has been killed.

(MORE)

## THE LEADER (CONT'D)

This is proof, not that we needed it, of the importance of us standing together, against those enemies of the state that want to see us divided.

We stand against those who try to manipulate decent citizens like us with violence, propaganda and unchecked ideology.

It seems to me, that in light of this awful act, and in respect for everything this great man stood for... there is only one reasonable thing left that we can do.

Beat.

I've decided to call a minute's silence.

An entire minute silence now plays out in real time.

Over the course of this minute everyone just stands with one hand in the air, as if taking an oath.

A tear fall down one man's face.

The Wife, near the front, looks blissful.

As we near the end of the minute the camera moves through this group, slowly, until it reaches the window at the back, where the sun is rising / setting.

It moves through the glass, outside, and suddenly we see...  
the world outside exists in colour.